

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, XM

SUBJECT: ICFTU BOARD MEETING: ORIT

REF: EC BRUSSELS 11666

1. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) HAS GOTTEN AWAY FROM THE "VERY NEGATIVE" ATTITUDE THAT PREVAILIED TWO YEARS AGO IN REGARD TO THE INTERAMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS (ORIT), ACCORDING TO JOHN VANDERVEKEN, ICFTU ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY. HE SAID THAT THE A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE WAS APPARENT AT THE NOV. 24-26 ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING AND AT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING THAT PRECEDED IT.

2. UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF JOE MORRIS OF CANADA, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AGREED TO HELP FINANCE THE APRIL 1977 CONGRESS OF ORIT IN MEXICO CITY, VANDERVEKEN SAID. IN ADDITION, THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ENDORSED AN "UNDERSTANDING" REACHED BETWEEN THE ICFTU SECRETARIAT AND THE ORIT TO "JOINTLY EXAMINE THE SITUATION IN LATIN AMERICA COUNTRY BY COUNTRY WHERE THE ICFTU HAS AFFILIATES AND SEE WHAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE THE ICFTU CAN GIVE TO HELP STRENGTHEN THE FREE AND DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, TO FIGHT EXPLOITATION, AND TO IMPROVE

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THE WELFARE OF ALL WORKERS CONCERNED."

3. THE REVIEW OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SITUATION WILL BE CONDUCTED FIRST HAND IN JANUARY BY ENZO FRISO, HEAD OF THE ICFTU'S DEPARTMENT FOR EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS, AND JULIO ETCHEVERRY, ORIT GENERAL SECRETARY. THE TWO WILL JOINTLY VISIT LATIN AMERICA AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE CARIBBEAN CONGRESS OF LABOR TO BE HELD JANUARY 5-7 IN ANTIGUA.

4. ACCORDING TO VANDERVEKEN, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD DISCUSSION OF ORIT AND LATIN AMERICA WAS FREE OF THE "ANTI-AMERICA"BIAS THAT TWO YEARS AGO, UNDER THE PRODDING OF SWEDISH AND DUTCH AFFILIATES, CAUSED THE ICFTU TO TRY TO CHALLENGE THE AFL-CIO ROLE IN ORIT.

5. THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN TO "GET AWAY FROM THE CONFLICT SITUATION" AND TO "RESTORE MUTUAL CONFIDENCE" ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, VANDERVEKEN SAID, AND ADDED THAT THE MOOD AT THE RECENT ICFTU MEEEEINGS REFLECTED A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS TOWARD THAT GOAL.

6. THE MAIN ARGUMENT HE AND ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY KERSTEN HAVE USED, VANDERVEKEN SAID, WAS THIS (IN SUMMARY): "THE AFL-CIO AND ITS FRIENDS IN LATIN AMERICA ARE OUR NATURAL ALLIES. LHEY ARE SSEKING THE SAME GOALS WE ARE--THE ELIMINATION OF DICTATORSHIP AND THE EXTENSION OF FREEDOM. WE SHOULD BE WORKING WITH THEM, NOT AGAINST THEM."

7. WE WILL DEBRIEF FRISO UPON HIS RETURN, AND IN OTHER WAYS KEEP A WATCH ON LABOR DEVELOPMENTS HERE RELATED TO LATIN AMERICA. HINTON

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## Message Attributes

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